

## **New crop breeding technologies – BBSRC position statement published**

BBSRC has today published a position statement on new biotechnologies in crop breeding.

The position statement can be downloaded from the BBSRC website at:

<http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Policies/genetic-crop-improvement-position-statement.pdf>

The statement covers techniques commonly referred to as ‘genome editing’ that allow precisely targeted changes to be made to genetic information, such as adding, removing or replacing DNA at specific locations. It also covers techniques that can switch genes on and off while the DNA sequence remains unchanged. These novel genetic techniques, developed in recent years, are advancing rapidly. BBSRC’s position statement sets out the current landscape, recognising that the techniques are already widely used in research and that the regulatory processes for new crops will need to be able to accommodate them.

The position statement was produced following a workshop involving experts from a variety of backgrounds, including plant scientists, regulators and social scientists. An expert panel was then convened to produce the statement.

We intend to use the statement as a platform to promote further dialogue with stakeholders in the UK and Europe about these new techniques and the potential they offer for helping to develop the new crops that will be needed in future, but also their implications for the regulatory framework for assessing novel crops.

BBSRC aims to promote an open and constructive conversation about the role of new technologies in crop improvement and how an effective, proportionate and robust regulatory system can provide confidence to growers and consumers and support innovation to meet current and future challenges. We would like to include a broad range of interested parties in this conversation and would like to encourage you to feedback any initial comments on the statement as the first stage of this.

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